

The Schools Network

Strategy for 2011-2012 to 2013-2014



We are The Schools Network, an independent, not-for-profit membership organisation dedicated to raising levels of achievement in education. We have a membership of over 5,000 schools, academies, universities, colleges and local authorities. We are a registered charity. Formerly we were known as the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.



For 24 years we have supported schools to manage themselves and helped develop headteachers to take leadership roles in the school system. We have helped schools to develop solutions to their own problems and to share their best teaching and learning and new practice within our networks.

We have also worked to encourage schools to become more open to parents and the community, build stronger relationships with businesses and universities, and to develop international partnerships and take on perspectives and standards from around the world. We will continue to support member schools, from the UK and throughout the world, to work together and compare standards with one another, moving towards the '100% system' in which every student is able to achieve their full potential whatever their background or circumstances.

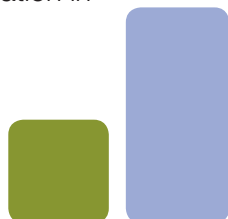


Our aim

'To give practical support to transforming education by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high-performing schools and academies in partnership with business and the wider community.'

About us

- We work with schools and academies throughout England, and in 36 countries across the world, to raise achievement for pupils of all ages and backgrounds.
- All our resources are invested and reinvested in supporting the school system. To extend this commitment, we plan to build an education endowment fund.
- Most English mainstream secondary schools, half of special schools, and a growing number of primary schools are members of our organisation.
- We are the largest membership organisation for all types of academies and have been supporting innovation in the school system for over 20 years.
- There is no comparable network which gives school leaders access to leading practice and innovation in other schools.
- We are aiming to become an academy sponsor and school provider, drawing on the strength of our networks.
- Our approach is 'by schools, for schools'. All our work is designed and delivered by serving school leaders, and in many cases it is accredited by universities.
- Our National Headteacher Steering Group makes sure that the professional perspectives of school leaders inform national policy development and debate.



By schools, for schools

Our way of working is 'by schools, for schools'.

By this, we mean:

- making sure that improving student achievement and raising academic standards are at the heart of everything we do.
- making sure that headteachers take the lead in directing our work.
- involving headteachers and other teaching staff in designing and delivering our programmes, activities, research and development.
- inspiring, challenging and motivating headteachers and other teaching staff to raise standards, and to support and challenge one another.
- validating and accrediting educational practices and measuring educational outcomes.



'The SSAT embodies the principle that in education we should above all trust the teacher. The SSAT has shown us that the best people to inspire teachers are other teachers and the best people to show heads how to improve their school are other heads who have already generated amazing improvements.'

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

*Secretary of State for Education,
1 March 2011*

Our objectives

- 1) To develop as a representative membership organisation, leading across the primary, special and secondary sectors.
- 2) To provide networking and services to our members.
- 3) To provide accredited leadership and other professional development for school staff at every level, regionally and nationally, using the 'by schools for schools' principle.
- 4) To sponsor academies in England and provide schools internationally.
- 5) To set up and grow an endowment fund.
- 6) To enable schools to understand and meet the educational challenge of globalisation, communication technologies and a 'young world'.



Objective one

'To develop as a representative membership organisation, leading across the primary, special and secondary sectors. We will do this by forging independent, professional, intellectual and system leadership through our unique headteacher steering group structure, as well as leading and hosting educational debate.'

We will do the following.

- Support and develop our headteacher and practitioner networks to provide system leadership for English secondary, primary and special schools, setting world-class standards in teaching and learning.
- Build our networks of schools and academies to support educational development and research, to identify where they can lead the way in new educational ideas and approaches, and to share their work with other schools.
- Increase the contributions of our National Headteacher Steering Group to make sure that the professional perspectives of headteachers shape and drive national education policy, while developing our steering group structure to become more wide reaching and to include more headteachers.
- Hold an agenda-setting national conference each year and a conference for each of our networks, and bring together the members of our national network of headteacher steering groups twice a year.
- Develop the intellectual leadership of teachers and school leaders through lectures, conferences, publications and research.

Objective two

‘To provide networking and services to our members. This will enable them, working collaboratively with shared moral purpose, to close the gap between students. It will also develop genuinely world class education for every student, taking advantage of the new freedoms as appropriate.’

We will do the following.

- Share and develop the best teaching and learning in member schools and academies in areas that are important to raising achievement¹ through the continued development of our schools-based Leadership and Innovation Academy, and using our national networks of consultant schools and lead practitioners.
- Provide national leadership of subject teaching and learning, with benchmarking to make sure that practice matches world standards.
- Develop our international networks to allow teachers, leaders and students in schools and academies to learn from colleagues in world-leading schools.
- Provide national leadership in developing classroom teaching, including the use of new technologies to improve learning.
- Each year, hold an achievement show to showcase excellence and innovation in classroom teaching, and subject conferences to showcase world-class subject teaching and learning.
- Work as an internationally-recognised centre of excellence for analysing school and student performance data and publish an analysis of educational outcomes in member schools each year. Make a leading contribution to debate and practice on holding schools accountable for their performance.

¹ Our eight areas of work are achievement, community, globalisation, innovation, leadership and governance, new technologies, subjects and specialism, and teaching and learning.

Objective three

‘To provide accredited leadership and other professional development for school staff at every level, regionally and nationally, using the “by schools for schools” principle. This will enable member school staff and students to respond to changing needs in their own schools and participate in the development of the whole system to raise standards.’

We will do the following.

- Build individual relationships with teachers and other staff in member schools, through our schools-based Leadership and Innovation Academy providing specially designed professional development throughout their careers.
- Work with a wide range of teaching schools and other outstanding schools that choose to develop independent training and professional development to help prepare teachers to excel in all types of school and settings.
- Use the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP) to support member schools to develop whole-school approaches to improving teaching and learning.



- Work with the University of Warwick to build accreditation of our professional development for school leaders and classroom practitioners, and build our role and reputation as a teaching institution.

Objective four

‘To sponsor academies in England and provide schools internationally. This will demonstrate the leading and innovative practice of the SSAT school and partner networks.’

We will do the following.

- Set up an academy trust to sponsor academies, in all phases and sectors, each with the aim of transforming educational opportunity for every student within the academy and to provide educational leadership in the school system. We aim to begin to work as an academy sponsor in England in 2012.
- Sponsor and support schools internationally, building on our highly successful work in Abu Dhabi since 2009, and use this work to strengthen international links between schools and build understanding of different educational systems, cultures and societies.



Objective five

‘To set up and grow an endowment fund. This will provide support for educational development and research, in particular by providing grants to schools and thus recycling resource to members.’

We will do the following.

- Build up a permanent endowment fund with the money we get from the activities we charge for as well as from specific fundraising with our well-established network of sponsors. We will use the endowment fund to support development and applied research in member schools to benefit the education of young people. We aim to begin to award research and development grants to member schools in the 2012/2013 academic year.



Objective six

‘To enable schools to understand and meet the educational challenge of globalisation, communication technologies and a “young world”. They will do this by working through the iNet charter and by developing the unique talent of every student.’

We will do the following.

- Build iNet (our global network) to encourage and support member schools around the world to develop ‘global perspectives’ among their staff and students, and to support schools, teachers and students to develop practical links and work together following the iNet Charter.
 - Provide national leadership for teaching and learning of Mandarin Chinese and about Chinese society, working through our partnerships in China and our Model Confucius Institute (which will be called the National Centre for the Teaching of Chinese and Globalisation), and work with Hanban to train an extra 1000 teachers of Chinese by 2015.
- (Hanban is an organisation linked to the Chinese Ministry of Education, committed to promoting the teaching of Chinese language and culture.)
- Provide national leadership for teaching and learning of Arabic, and about Islamic culture, history and achievements, drawing on our partnerships in the Middle East.
 - Support schools to give practical and imaginative responses to the educational opportunities and challenges arising from globalisation and new technologies, towards our vision ‘Every school a global enterprise, every student a global entrepreneur’.

The iNet mission



‘To create powerful and innovative networks of schools that have achieved or have committed themselves to achieving systematic, significant and sustained change that ensures outstanding outcomes for all students in all settings.’



We have a 12-person Board of trustees chaired by Nick Stuart CB and including a number of outstanding school leaders from member schools. The management team is led by our Chief Executive Elizabeth Reid.

We also have a 30-person National Headteacher Steering Group (NHSG), chaired by John Townsley, Principal of Morley Academy in Leeds. The NHSG meets regularly with our senior leadership and key stakeholders in the education system.

You can read more about our governance and management, and about the work of the National Headteacher Steering Group, on the 'About us' section of our website.





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Charity Number 296729. Registered in England. Company number 2124695.
August 2011.

